

AIR POUCH JUL 14 1955 CONFIDENTIAL

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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM: AMEMBASSY, HELSINKI

45
DESP. NO.

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

July 14, 1955
DATE

REF

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	7/16	CIA-5, ARMY-3, NAVY-3, AIR-3, ASIA-10

SUBJECT: Further Editorial on Porkkala Question

There is attached a translation of an editorial which appeared in "Nya Pressen" for July 13. This editorial comments on "Helsingin Sanomat's" article of that morning regarding the conceivable return of the Porkkala area to Finland by the U.S.S.R. (see Embassy despatch No. 43 of July 13, 1955). It applauds the idea in general, but cautions that the Porkkala question must not become a pawn in great power politics, since it is one which should be settled directly between Finland and the U.S.S.R. The editorial imputes to the "Helsingin Sanomat" article a possible calculation that Finland could now take advantage of conditions in international affairs to make a move forward. The Embassy does not consider this imputation justified by the language of the "Helsingin Sanomat" article.

No other editorial on this subject appeared in the morning press of July 14, and no Foreign Office reaction has been received.

For the Ambassador:

H. Bartlett Wells

H. Bartlett Wells
First Secretary of Embassy

Enclosure:

Translation of editorial

CC: Amembassy Berne

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Translation

("Nya Pressen", July 13th, 1955)

The Porkkala Question

The military bases of the great powers on the territory of foreign states have been a theme much commented upon in the public debate of this spring. This theme has been made especially timely through the Russian demand for the abandonment of all such bases in connection with the disarmament discussion some time ago. This is something which carried to its ultimate conclusion would take on significance for our little country, too, since as we know the Soviet Union itself leases a naval base only a few kilometers from our capital.

It is a cheering sign of normalization of tensions that so delicate a subject as the Porkkala base, and the many and sensible discomforts it implies for our part, should be taken up for public discussion, most recently today in "Helsingin Sanomat". We are also fully agreed with those who consider that there is no longer any occasion to hide one's head in the sand; that the time is now ripe for a factual debate about things, naming them by their right names.

No one, whether here at home or beyond the country's boundaries, need be in any doubt, we think, about how we here in Finland regard the subject of Porkkala. The arrangement which in the peace treaty was forced upon defeated little Finland has been a thorn in our flesh, a humiliating remembrance of the trials of being the weaker when the greater quarrel. If there is any real chance of correcting conditions - which the Russian standpoint on the base problem in general may perhaps justify hoping for - this chance must naturally be exploited. Here those who conduct our official foreign policy have the big and appropriate job of sounding every possibility, and of not missing any.

Yet there may still be reason to warn against the notion that the fact this problem has been taken up for discussion means anything like solution of the matter. Ordinary politics are not prosecuted according to principles of benevolence - and large-scale policy even less. In the Porkkala question we have at, the most, moral arguments as support for our point of view: as everybody knows, we have renounced juridical claims, obliged or forced to do so as we were. The eventual development of the question for the future will thus depend on us to a rather limited extent.

No one has yet any idea what may come of this matter. But however it may go, the Porkkala question should in no event become entangled

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become entangled in great policy maneuvers in the area of international politics. All of our so-called foreign policy aspirations have since the war been pointed in the direction of keeping the country apart from international conflicts, aside from the power-gambling of the big countries and everything that goes with it. This line we must hold to for the future as well. The most recent commentary upon the Porkkala case seem to a certain degree to represent a slightly different conception, which appears to calculate that we could now take advantage of conditions on the international market to make an advance. If this interpretation is right, for our part we would like to say that we do not consider this wise or well considered. The Porkkala question must not be made a pawn in a grand policy connection. If it is something that can be prosecuted from our side this ought to be done according to our own lines, quite to one side from the bargaining at the council table of the Great.

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